

MONTANA JOINT APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON LONG RANGE PLANNING

January 16, 2009

EXHIBIT 5  
DATE Jan 16, 09  
HB 6  
H.B.

To: Chairman Dave Kasten and Committee Members

From: Pat Byrne, Clinton Irrigation District

Subject: Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program

My name is Pat Byrne and I am currently President of the Clinton Irrigation District, which is located 20 miles East of Missoula. Our District has submitted an application for a DNRC Renewable Resource Grant and have been Ranked # 13, in the order of Ranking Recommendations. Because of this ranking, we may not have the opportunity to appear before your committee but I wanted to make just a few remarks and to thank you for your consideration.

To set the stage, our small district was established in 1919, when we first appropriated water from the Clarks Fork River to irrigate some 1000 acres of agricultural ground. We have always operated this district on a shoestring budget and counted on volunteer help to keep the water costs down for our members. It was only by the grace of god and the assistance of a DNRC Preliminary Planning Grant, that we discovered just what poor condition and serious problems we are facing with the continued operation of our system.

First and most importantly, I want to thank you as leaders of our State for establishing such a wonderful program, and to stress just how important these Preliminary Planning and Irrigation Grants are for smaller districts like ours.

In real life, I'm a Real Estate Broker, and one day I saw a reference come across my desk regarding the DNRC Planning Grant Program. I contacted Ms. Pam Smith of the DNRC to see if our Irrigation District would be eligible for one of these grants. I was told we were qualified and

that we should make an application and submit it to her office for consideration. Fortunately, we were approved, hired an engineering firm and proceeded to complete an inventory and analysis of our district. We discovered that our system was in grave condition with numerous problems and some serious enough to cause damage to others if not corrected. Following the engineering study, we established a priority list to deal with the identified problems and then made application for the RRGL program to rehabilitate a 1550-foot section of the Main Supply Canal. This is the proposal rated #13 in the rating recommendations, and will address issues of water conservation, irrigation efficiency and crop yields of the district.

The Clinton Irrigation District, would not be able to continue its operations without the assistance of these state funds. As mentioned earlier, we are a small district, which over the years has not been able to properly maintain the systems canals and structures because of our limited revenues. In recent years, because of our proximity to Missoula, issues of subdivisions, new road construction, relocation of culverts and lateral ditches have placed additional time and financial constraints on our operations.

In conclusion, we are grateful to the State of Montana, the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and the Long Range Planning Subcommittee for your cooperation and consideration of our project.

Respectfully Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Pat Byrne".

Pat Byrne, President  
Clinton Irrigation District  
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Clinton, Montana, 59825

Cc: CID Commissioners  
Shellie Nelson Dist. #2  
Kathy Veseth, Dist. #1